Spark Gap

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Lt. Governor Becky Skillman Awards $200,000 Grant to South Central Indiana Rural Electric Member Corp. for Broadband Over Powerline (BPL) - May 20, 2005

INDIANAPOLIS —Lt. Governor Becky Skillman today awarded a $200,000 Rural Development Grant to South Central Indiana Rural Electric Member Corp. Grant funds will be used to provide high-speed Internet service, utilizing BPL technology, to SCI REMC cooperative members living in rural areas of Morgan, Monroe, Owen, and Brown counties. The Overall objectives is to have high-speed BPL service available to 33,000 members within a five year period. With the completion of this project, the goals will be to have approximately 40% of the area served within a two-year period.

"What you do as individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in your communities, is as important as anything state government will do, "said Lt. Governor Skillman. "Today we are giving you resources to further your own economic development efforts. These grants are designed to help *Hoosiers* develop and support projects that address specific needs in their communities. These awards celebrate the ideas that make Indiana 's charming small towns and cities great."

The rural development grants come from two funds, the Rural Development Council Fund (RDCF) and the Rural Development Action Fund (RDAF). RDCF monies go to the creation of "regional entities" that promote the improvement of the quality of life in rural Indiana . The RDAF provides grant dollars to entities that work to enhance and assist in improving the economic viability of rural Indiana communities. Grants are awarded through competitive funding rounds. 40 communities are receiving grants for a total of $6.2 million, but as many as 80 communities will benefit from the projects being funded.

BPL Grant Awarded

Upcoming Events

MARC has two upcoming events that need our participation. Both are occurring on the same day - **September 24th** - so grab your HTs, extra batteriers, chairs, coolers and other items and volunteer to have some fun.. Contact Matt Payne, KB9UJE, if you can volunteer for the Bargersville Street Fair or contact Bob LaGrange, N9SIU, if can volunteer for the Greenwood High School Marching Band Competition.

The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

MARC

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club
P. O. Box 836
Franklin, IN 46131
www.midstatehams.org

Are you an amateur radio ambassador?

by Matt Payne, KB9UJE

Ambassador
am·bas·sa·dor (ãm-bãs'Yˆ-dYˆr, -dôr')
Noun

Matt Payne, KB9UJE, Trustee

1. A minister of the highest rank sent to a foreign court to represent there his sovereign or country.
2. An official messenger and representative

It was the summer of 1999, and I still remember it like it was yesterday. The ink on my new amateur radio license was barely dry as I walked up to the door of the home on Marcy Lane in Greenwood. Taking a minute to collect myself, I knocked at the door. I had met Bob just a few weeks before, when several of my new amateur radio friends had assembled at his home to help put up a dual band antenna. As Barb Rogers climbed the tower to hang the aerial from the tower behind the home, the older, clumsier, and more rotund of us congregated below, shouting what we thought to be helpful imprecations up at Barb, who was busy wishing none of us were there.

US: I think the antenna is a little crooked, Barb! Just a little bit more to the right!

BARB: I'm going to drop this wrench on the next person who says ANYTHING AT ALL!

Eventually the tower went up, and the cables were routed, and Bob was on the air. Since he lived close-by, and my antenna situation was fairly dismal as a new ham, we talked frequently. During one of those many conversations, I mentioned that I would like to get into packet radio. Bob invited me over almost immediately. Bob answered the door, and invited me inside. We went down the hallway into his "shack", which was filled with two computers, several HF radios, and the dual band radio with which we had been communicating. To a new ham like myself, his shack was unbelievable. Everything that a radio enthusiast could want was there. A Greenwood Police dispatcher's voice was coming from a well worn and dependable radio shack scanner, on top of which was balanced several books and magazines. The fan from a linear amplifier blew against my legs. The room somehow exuded both a sense of order and haphazardness, as if everything in the room was placed where it was for a reason, regardless of how it would appear to an outsider. It was the neatest room I had ever seen.

Are you an elmer?

But the fun wasn't over. Bob showed me his packet station. Stationed to the left of his voice stations was a dedicated 2 meter radio, connected to an IBM 486 computer. Beacons from around the area were listed on the screen; testaments to the dedication of the few remaining conventional packet users. Callsigns such as WA9DRF, KJ9D, N9IBD and WW9A scrolled slowly by, as each node beaconed. Bob demonstrated several aspects of conventional packet, including checking into a BBS, using a node to increase transmissions, and gathering data from a DX Cluster. But there was more to come.

Bob opened the closet in his radio room. About ten large tupperware containers were stacked precariously inside.

"I think there's a spare radio in one of those…. Somewhere" Bob added with a mischievous grin. So we went to work. I took down each of the cases, and Bob and I went through them. Old radios, tuners, meters, magazines, wires, components, and what looked suspiciously like the insides of a small electronics store were removed from the cases, and then replaced. Finally we found what we were looking for. A Kenwood TM-231A was hiding in the bottom of the next to last case. Underneath that was a small black rectangle with lights and a button on one side.

"That box is a TNC. You'll need both of these for packet radio." Bob explained. But he didn't stop there. Making a written list of components, he sent me to Radio Shack to purchase a 9 pin serial plug, a microphone connector, and some wire. Then he made me a cable to connect the TNC to the radio. Then, after putting the plastic tubs back in the closet, we took them all out again and found a serial plug for my computer.

When I tried to pay him for all of his effort, he would have none of it. "People helped me when I first started, and that's the way it has always been. Now I'm helping you." And with that, he sent me on my way to try out Packet Radio, and check in with him when it was all connected.

Bob was more than an elmer, he was an ambassador to amateur radio. He always represented the hobby in the best possible way, and never hesitated to help newcomers along. His on-the-air demeanor was always perfect, and he was active on the local repeaters, as well as on HF. He exemplified the amateur radio code, in words and deeds.

(continued on next page)

Officers

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Ernest Clark, KB9SKI

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Matt Payne, KB9UJE

Spark Gap Editor:
Bob LaGrange, N9SIU

(***Ambassador*** *continued from previous page)*

As most of you already know, Bob DeSpain, N9DE became a silent key on July 31st, 2005. Amateur Radio lost a good ambassador that day. While we can't ever replace Bob, perhaps we can all re-evaluate our ambassador status in regards to amateur radio.

We can all be good ambassadors to our hobby. It doesn't require attending every event, nor does it matter what license class you are, nor does it require a specific level of CW proficiency. It has nothing to do with how many QSL cards you have, or how many countries you have worked. Nor does it matter how many "official" magnetic signs or decals are on your car or truck. Being a good ambassador has nothing at all to do with these things.

How do we act on the air? Are we friendly towards newcomers to our local repeaters? Do we answer the folks who call mobile? If a member is having a problem with their vehicle, do we offer to make a call for them, or head out to meet them with the much needed set of jumper cables?

How do we act off the air? Do we climb towers to help put up antennas for amateurs, or at least stand on the ground and offer moral support (and dodge wrenches)? Do we take the time to visit sick hams who are in the hospital, or give rides to and from the meetings to those who can't drive? What about new member recruitment? When folks ask about the antennas on your vehicle and the radio on your waist, are you quick to explain their use? Or do you try to shrug them off as a bother? When I was sixteen years old, I saw someone in McDonalds with what I thought was a scanner. It turns out it was an amateur radio. The gentleman took twenty minutes to explain the hobby to me. He also told me his callsign was WE7A. I'll never forget him or the fact that he took the time to be an ambassador to the hobby. The child we meet in Hardees today could be the club president a few short years from now. Do we take the time to show people our passion in the hobby? Is our excitement contagious?

On July 31st, we lost a great ambassador. But we didn't lose the last ambassador. Be the best representative of your hobby that you can possibly be, and encourage the same in others. Our hobby deserves nothing less.

WANTED

We need articles or article suggestions for the Spark Gap. Please send us your thoughts on amateur radio related topics or let us know what you want to see in your newsletter. Contact either Bob LaGrange, N9SIU, or Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH.

FEMA NIMS Update

This update comes to us from Dave Pifer, the ARRL Indiana Emergency Coordinator. NIMS (National Incident Management System) has training called the IS-700. Dave writes to us, "I have received reports that several public service agencies in our section are refusing to accept Amateur Radio Volunteers unless they have the NIMS IS-700 training. Therefore, I am recommending that everyone in ARES take the NIMS IS-700 course which is available on-lin for free. I do know that most if not all first responders are being required to have the NIMS training. Therefore, since thay have to have the training, everyone here in ARES is going to have the training. It is my sincere hope that this is not a simple means/excuse for some public service individuals to refuse to allow Amateur Radio operators to help out."

Links to some NIMS resources and the FEMA training are:

http://www.nimsonline.com/; http://fema.gov/nims/; and http://training.fema/gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp

Silent Key

Bob DeSpain, N9DE

July 31, 2005

WA9RDF Repeater 146.835/ 146.235 MHz 151.4 Hz PL Tone

<u>Weekly Net</u> Every Sunday at 7PM EST

Tune in to hear the ARRL Newsline!

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club
P. O. Box 836
Franklin, IN 46131
www.midstatehams.org
317.887.2558

2005 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

AUGUST

20 **MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

20 **Sprint Triathlon, Eagle Creek**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, for information
Indianapolis, IN

28 **Mideast Triathlon**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, for information
Indianapolis, IN

SEPTEMBER

17 **MARC Meeting/Picnic**
Union Christian Church, 1267 East County Road 300 South, Franklin, IN

24 **Greenwood High School Marching Band Invitational**
Greenwood, IN

24 **Bargersville Street Fair**
Bargersville, IN

25 **Greenfield Hamfest**
Hancock County 4H Fairgrounds, Greenfield, IN

Note: For most Indianapolis events, contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, to volunteer or for more information check out website www.indyhams.org.

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131 See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.